

2 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

The following is an approximate calendar of events which will orient us to the position that the Second Epistle to Timothy occupied in the ministry of the apostle Paul. Paul wrote this epistle around A.D. 67.

[c. B.C. 58] -- Paul was apparently arrested in Jerusalem.

[c. B.C. 61] -- This is the approximate time that Paul arrived in Rome. He had spent these three years in prison, going from one trial to another before different Roman rulers.

[c. B.C. 61-63] -- Paul underwent his first Roman imprisonment. We do not have this recorded in the Book of Acts, which breaks off at the very beginning of Paul's first Roman imprisonment.

[c. B.C. 64-67] -- Paul was released from prison, and during this period he covered a great deal of territory. It was during this time that he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus from Macedonia.

[c. B.C. 67] -- Paul was arrested again.

[c. B.C. 68] -- Paul was beheaded in Rome. Before his death he wrote 2 Timothy.

The two verses that state the theme and sound the tone of this second epistle are these: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ([2Tim. 2:15](#)). "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" ([2Tim. 4:2](#)).

You can, I think, emphasize one word in this epistle above other words. That word is loyalty: (1) loyalty in suffering ([2Tim. 1](#)); (2) loyalty in service ([2Tim. 2](#)); (3) loyalty in apostasy ([2Tim. 3](#) through [2Tim. 4:5](#)); and (4) Lord loyal to His servants in desertion ([2Tim. 4:6-22](#)).

The deathbed statement of any individual has an importance which is not attached to other remarks. This is what lends significance to 2 Timothy. It is the final communication of Paul. It has a note of sadness which is not detected in his other epistles. Nevertheless, there is the overtone of triumph: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," written by Paul as his own epitaph ([2Tim. 4:7](#)). Also, because this was his last letter, Paul was very personal. In these four short chapters, there are approximately twenty-five references to individuals.

In this little book of 2 Timothy an ominous dark cloud is seen on the horizon. It is the coming apostasy. Today apostasy has broken like a storm, like a Texas tornado, on the world and in the church. What do we mean by apostasy? Webster defines apostasy as "total desertion of the principles of faith." So apostasy is not due to ignorance; it is a heresy. Apostasy is deliberate error. It is intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truths of the gospel and the doctrines of the faith, but has repudiated them.

Paul here in 2 Timothy speaks of the ultimate outcome of gospel preaching. The final fruition will not be the total conversion of mankind, nor will it usher in the Millennium. On the contrary, there will come about an apostasy which will well-nigh blot out the faith from the earth. In fact, there are two departures that will occur at the end of the age: One is the departure of the church, which we call the Rapture, translated from the Greek *harpazo*, meaning "caught up." "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up [or raptured] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air . . ." ([1Thess. 4:16-17](#)). When the believers are gone, the organization, the old shell of the church that's left down here, will totally depart from the faith. That is the second departure, the departure from the faith. The Lord Jesus Himself gave this startling statement concerning it: ". . . when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" ([Luke 18:8](#)). As couched in the Greek language, it demands a negative answer. So the answer must be, "No, He will not find the faith on the earth when He returns."

This view is not in keeping with the social gospel today, which expects to transform the world by tinkering with the social system. Such vain optimists have no patience with the doleful words of 2 Timothy, and they classify me as an intellectual obscurantist! But, in spite of that, the cold and hard facts of history and the events of the present hour demonstrate the accuracy of Paul. We are now in the midst of an apostasy which is cut to the pattern of Paul's words in remarkable detail.

The visible church has entered the orbit of an awful apostasy. The invisible church -- that is, the real body of believers -- is not affected. The invisible church today is still here; and, although I wish it were a little more visible than it is, it's on its way to the epiphany of glory. It is moving toward the Rapture. That is a very comforting thought in these days in which we live.

Because of the threat of apostasy, Paul emphasizes the Word of God here more than he does in any other epistle. In fact, both Paul and Peter agree. Each of them in his "swan song" (2 Tim. and 2 Pet.) emphasizes the Word of God and the gospel.

My friend, the gospel rests upon a tremendous fact, and that fact is the total depravity of man. In other words, man is a lost sinner. A contemporary educator has put it something like this:

Where education assumes that the moral nature of man is capable of improvement, traditional Christianity assumes that the moral nature of man is corrupt and absolutely bad. Where it is assumed in education that an outside human agent may be instrumental in the moral improvement of men, in traditional Christianity it is assumed that the agent is God, and even so, the moral nature of man is not improved but exchanged for a new one.

Man is in such a state that he cannot be saved by perfect obedience -- because he cannot render it. Neither can he be saved by imperfect obedience -- because God will not accept it.

Therefore, the only solution is the gospel of the grace of God which reaches down and saves the sinner on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ. Faith in Christ transforms human life. We have a showcase today all over this globe of men and women who have been transformed by the gospel of the grace of God.

Liberal preaching, instead of presenting the grace of God to sinful man, goes out in three different directions. From some liberal pulpits we hear what is really popular psychology. It majors in topics such as this: "How to Overcome" or "How to Think Creatively" or "How to Think Affirmatively or Positively." It says that we're on the way upward and onward forever! That is popular psychology, and it doesn't seem to be getting us anywhere.

A second type of liberal preaching involves ethics. It preaches a nice little sweet gospel -- a sermonette preached by the preacherette to Christianettes. The message goes something like this: "Good is better than evil because it's nicer and gets you into less trouble." The picture of the average liberal church is that of a mild-mannered man standing before a group of mild-mannered people, urging them to be more mild-mannered! There's nothing quite as insipid as that. No wonder the Lord Jesus said to the church of Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" ([Rev. 3:15-16](#)). That would make anybody sick to his tummy. That's another reason I call these people Alka-Seltzer Christians. They're not only fizz, foam, and froth, but they cause you to need an Alka-Seltzer.

Then there's a third type of liberal preaching which is called the social gospel. They preach better race relations, pacifism, social justice, and the Christian social order. It is Christian socialism pure and simple.

In contrast, when the true gospel is preached and men come to Christ, they all become brothers. We don't need all this talk about better race relations. You cannot create better relationships by forcing people together. Only the gospel of the grace of God will make a man into a brother of mine. When that happens the color of a man's skin makes no difference at all.

The solution to man's problems can come only through preaching the grace of God. We need to recognize (as Martin Luther put it) that God creates out of nothing. Until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him. The grace of God through Jesus Christ is the way to transform and save mankind. That is what this epistle teaches, and that is why it is important for us to study 2 Timothy.

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Chapter 1

THEME: Afflictions of the gospel

Introduction (1:1-7)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus [[2Tim. 1:1](#)].

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." You recall that in Paul's first epistle to Timothy he said, "by the commandment of God" ([1Tim. 1:1](#)), and we saw that the commandments of God revealed the will of God, but that they were not the total will of God. Here he says "by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." How do you accept a promise? You do it by faith. That is the only way you can obtain eternal life. He offers it to you as a gift. You accept a gift because you believe the giver. You receive eternal life by believing in the Giver. The Lord Jesus gives you eternal life when you trust Him as Savior because He paid the penalty of your sin. He today can offer you heaven on the basis of your faith and trust in Him. When you believe Him and come His way, you honor Him. Therefore "the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" makes it clear that through Christ is the only way you can get eternal life, my friend.

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace,
from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord [[2Tim. 1:2](#)].

Paul greets Timothy as his "dearly beloved son" because Timothy was a great joy to the apostle Paul. Then he goes on to say, "Grace, mercy, and peace." As we mentioned in studying 1 Timothy, the salutation includes the word mercy (which is not found in the greetings of Paul's other letters). God is merciful when He does not give us what we deserve; that is, judgment and condemnation. Paul needed a great deal of mercy, and we do too. Fortunately, God is rich in mercy toward us.

"From God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." The emphasis here is upon the lordship of Jesus Christ.

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day [[2Tim. 1:3](#)].

Timothy was on the apostle Paul's prayer list. When I taught at a Bible institute, I always had the students find out who was on the apostle Paul's prayer list. They made the list by going through the letters of Paul and noting every time Paul said he prayed for somebody. By the way, how many preachers do you have on your prayer list? I hope you have your pastor.

Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy [[2Tim. 1:4](#)].

It is quite obvious that Paul loved Timothy, and this verse tells us that Timothy also loved Paul. The fact that Paul has been arrested, is back in prison, and even faces death really affects Timothy. Paul says, "I am mindful of your tears. And if I could only see you, that would bring joy to my heart."

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also [[2Tim. 1:5](#)].

Paul came out of Judaism, but this boy Timothy, apparently, was brought up in a Christian home. Both his grandmother and his mother were Christians. I'm sure that had a lot to do with this young man turning to Christ. Timothy's father was a Greek, and it is not known whether he was in the faith.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands [[2Tim. 1:6](#)].

When Paul put his hands on Timothy, that meant that Timothy was a partner with Paul; he shared with him the gift of teaching the Word of God. I am of the opinion that Paul intended for his mantle to fall upon Timothy. This young man was close to Paul, and when Paul was in prison in Rome, he said of Timothy, ". . . I have no man likeminded . . ." ([Phil. 2:20](#)). Here was a man who could carry on the teaching and preaching of Paul, and therefore Paul made him his partner. They were together in the ministry.

Now notice that Paul admonishes Timothy to "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee." This man had a gift, and Paul urges him to stir it up. What would that indicate to you? I wonder if Paul was concerned about Timothy there in Ephesus. Ephesus housed the temple of Diana and was one of the great "sin spots" in the Roman world. Paul had spent three years in Ephesus himself, and he knew that there were many allurements and enticements in the city. I wonder if he was afraid that Timothy might be reluctant and hold back from teaching the whole counsel of God. We can see Paul's concern for this young man whom he called "my dearly beloved son."

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind [[2Tim. 1:7](#)].

The word fear is better translated "cowardice." I think that many of us have misinterpreted this -- I know I have in the past. I remember that when I first began to travel by air, I didn't want to, but I was forced to use that mode of travel to meet my engagements. I certainly didn't enjoy it. At first, this disturbed me a great deal. I would make a flight, and then I would rebuke myself because of my fear. I tried to fight my fear.

Well, fear is a natural thing, and it is a good thing. For example, I am afraid of a lion. If there were one loose in the street, I would find a good place to hide. It is normal and good to have a sense of fear. But many of us, for some reason, have a fear of height, which makes us fear flying. I prayed about it and wondered why God didn't remove that from me, because I read in this verse that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear."

However, Paul is speaking not of a good kind of fear, but of cowardice. Paul is saying, "God hath not given us the spirit of cowardice; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

"A sound mind" means discipline. In other words, God does not intend that defeat should be the norm of Christian living. We should be disciplined Christians rather than slaves to our emotions. We are all moved by our emotions. That is why people will send money to organizations that advertise with the picture of a poor, hungry, little orphan. But Christians are not to be motivated by their emotions. Our emotions are not to master us. We are to be disciplined.

How does this apply to the question of fear? Is it wrong for me to have a fear of flying? No. It would be wrong for me to stay at home. You see, if I am a disciplined Christian, I am going to grit my teeth, go down and get that ticket, and take that trip because God has called me to an itinerant teaching ministry. Overcoming emotions means not letting your emotions stop you from doing something you should be doing. When you have a fear of flying, you discipline yourself to fly anyway. But you still live with your emotions. If you do like I do, you sit there on the plane, gritting your teeth and wondering how many more hours it will be, with every hour seeming like an eternity. If the plane starts bouncing around, I have a tendency to grab the seat in front of me. I know that the seat in front of me is not any safer than the seat I'm sitting in, but somehow I feel better when I have hold of it! Paul's admonition to Timothy is a wonderful help to me. God is telling me that I am not to be a defeated Christian; I should not let my emotions control my life.

On a tour to Bible lands I didn't want to go with the tour to Egypt, because on a previous trip I'd had a bad experience there, and I was very emotional about it. I didn't like Cairo, and I didn't want to go there. But the Lord forced me to overcome my feelings. I had planned to go ahead to Jerusalem, rest there a couple of days, and wait for the tour to reach me. But every hotel was filled, and we couldn't get a reservation. Then I thought of another way. I could stay in Athens and then just fly into Jerusalem at the same time the tour group did. But do you know what? There wasn't any hotel space in Athens, either. The only place I could go was to Cairo! The Lord made me overcome my emotions, and I'm thankful He did, because I had a delightful visit, and I learned a great deal.

Not Ashamed, But A Partaker Of Affliction (1:8-11)

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God [[2Tim. 1:8](#)].

I have labeled this chapter, "Afflictions of the gospel" because there is a feeling today that the Christian life is a life that ought to be very easy, nice and sweet, bright and breezy. A great many of us think that we have an indulgent heavenly Father who is just going to put us on a bed of roses, remove every stone out of our pathway, and not let anything serious happen to us. A retired lawyer sent me this statement which he found in a will. It read: "To my son I leave the pleasure of earning a living. For twenty-five years he thought the pleasure was mine. He was mistaken." And a great many Christians expect their heavenly Father to make things easy for them.

The Lord Jesus made it clear that we would have trouble. He said, ". . . In the world ye shall have tribulation [trouble]" ([John 16:33](#)). Christians will not go through the Great Tribulation, but you and I are certainly going through our own little tribulations. Samuel Rutherford made this statement: "If you were not strangers here, the hounds of the world would not bark at you." The Lord Jesus warned us that the world would not like Christians. He told His disciples, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" ([John 15:18](#)). There is something wrong if you become too popular as a Christian. I am afraid that many Christians are thinking like a little boy in Sunday School whose teacher asked, "Johnny, which of the parables do you like best?" The little fellow answered, "The one where everybody loafs and fishes." No, my friend, the Christian life is not a bed of roses. We are to be "partakers of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began [[2Tim. 1:9](#)].

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling" -- not because of who we are or what we have done -- "not according to our works." But --

"According to his own purpose and grace." God's wonderful purpose in the gospel was hidden in ages past but is now revealed through Paul. It had been a mystery in the Old Testament, an unrevealed secret, but is now revealed in the New Testament.

"Which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" -- all along God had this plan for us.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel [[2Tim. 1:10](#)].

Now this is a verse that deserves great emphasis.

"Who hath abolished death" is literally since He has made of none effect death. Death means something altogether different to the child of God -- Christ made it of no effect. Now, God did not eliminate death. Remember that Paul is writing this letter from prison where the sentence of death is upon him. But Paul is not talking about physical death. He

means spiritual death, eternal death, which is separation from God. Christ has indeed abolished spiritual death so that no sinner need go to a place where he'll be eternally separated from God. Christ is our Mediator, the one Mediator between God and man. God is satisfied with what Christ has done for us. The question is: Are you satisfied? Or are you trying to save yourself by your own good works? Let me repeat what I have said before: Man cannot be saved by perfect obedience, because he is incapable of rendering it. He cannot be saved by imperfect obedience, because God will not accept it. There is only one solution to the dilemma, and that is the One who said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)).

Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles [[2Tim. 1:11](#)].

Paul says he's a "preacher," a herald of the Word of God. He also says that he's "an apostle, and a teacher." As an apostle he had several gifts. I personally doubt whether any man since the apostles has more than one gift. I've met preachers who thought they could sing, but my experience has been that either they couldn't sing or they couldn't preach -- it was one or the other. I don't believe He will give us two or more gifts, because it is difficult enough to exercise one.

Not Ashamed, But Assured (1:12-18)

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day [[2Tim. 1:12](#)].

"I am not ashamed." Although he was in prison and the sentence of death was upon him, he was not ashamed of the gospel. Paul had written to the Romans in [Rom. 1:16](#); "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . . ." And back in [verse 8](#) of the first chapter of 2 Timothy, Paul urges Timothy not to be ashamed either. Sometimes Christians are very reluctant to witness. We are all tongue-tied at times, but we ought not to be.

"He is able to keep that which I have committed [entrusted] unto him." Literally, the deposit. This means that Paul deposited his faith in Christ until the day of judgment. Or it can mean that "God made a deposit with me." God's deposit of gifts in Paul's life made him a debtor to the entire world.

My friend, you and I are debtors. Perhaps you are saying, "I want you to know that I pay my honest debts." Well, you and I have not paid our honest debts until every person on the topside of this earth has heard the gospel.

"He is able to keep that which I have committed." It is a great comfort to know that all we are and all we have is in His hands.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus [[2Tim. 1:13](#)].

"Sound words" -- the words of Scripture are inspired. I believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Word of God and do not think that any other viewpoint is satisfactory, and certainly it does not satisfy the demands of Scripture.

That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us [[2Tim. 1:14](#)].

It is important to see that the Christian life can be lived only in the power of the Holy Spirit. Back in [verse 7](#), Paul talked about power, love, and a sound mind, all of which are fruits of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote that ". . . the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance . . ." ([Gal. 5:22-23](#)).

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes [[2Tim. 1:15](#)].

Paul gives the actual names of those who have been unfaithful to him. Back in the first chapter of 1 Timothy Paul noted that some had fallen away, here it is all -- that is, all who are now in Asia who had formerly been with him in Rome. I call your attention to this because it seems to me that apostasy is not the thing that characterizes only the last days of the church. It has occurred throughout the entire history of the church. I had a church history professor who said that the history of the church is the history of apostasy or, as he put it, the history of heresies. How true that has been.

The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well [[2Tim. 1:16-18](#)].

Here is a wonderful saint of God. I'd have loved to have been Onesiphorus (and I would have hated to have been Hermogenes). Onesiphorus, apparently from Ephesus, was in Rome on business. He was a busy man, but he had time to look up Paul who was in prison. How lovely! Probably Paul had led him to the Lord, and you can't despise a man who has led you to Christ.

Chapter 2

THEME: Active in service

The second chapter of 2Timothy is delightful. In these verses there are seven figures of speech that are used to describe the duty and the activity of a believer, which need to be impressed upon us more and more as we approach the end time.

A Son (2:1-2)

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus [[2Tim. 2:1](#)].

Paul begins with the first figure of speech, "Thou therefore, my son." Timothy was not the son of Paul in a physical way. He was his spiritual son in the sense that it was under Paul's ministry that this young man had turned to Christ. A child of God is born into God's family by means of his faith in Christ. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" ([1Pet. 1:23](#)). Timothy is in the family of God, and he is a child of God. Because of this very reason, Paul says these words to Timothy:

"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." I love this -- "be strong in grace." My friend, if you think that you can grit your teeth and go out and live the Christian life on your own, you're in for a great disappointment. If you feel that you can follow a few little rules or some clever gimmicks to make you a mature Christian, then you have fallen into a subtle trap of legalism. Paul gives no rules, and the Word of God has no rules to tell the child of God how to live the Christian life. We are saved by grace, and now we are to live by the grace of God and be strong in that grace.

Let me give you an example from my boyhood. My dad traveled a great deal in his work, and he always put down a few rules for me to follow while he was away. Some of them I obeyed. I had to cut the wood, and I didn't mind that. One time we had a place with a lot of trees on it, and I really enjoyed the exercise of cutting the trees into firewood. But my father had some other rules that I frankly didn't go for. I hate to admit this, but one of those rules was that I should attend Sunday school. The interesting thing is that he never went himself, but he always made me go. Anyway, when he was away from home, I didn't go. One time I was fishing, and he came home suddenly and found me. I had just pulled out a fish, turned around, and there stood my dad. He said, "Son, are you having any luck?" Well, my luck ran out right at that moment! I appealed to him and admitted that I had done wrong, and by grace he was good to me. He said, "I brought home a sack of candy for you and your sister to divide. I wasn't going to let you have it, but I think I will now." I really took advantage of his good nature and the fact that I was his son.

My father died when I was fourteen, but now I have a heavenly Father, and I sure do appeal to His grace. When things go wrong down here, I go to Him and appeal to Him. When I fail, I don't run from Him like I used to. I have found that when I am away from Him, the whipping He gives me hurts lots worse. I don't want to get out at the end of that switch where it really stings. I come in close to Him, and the closer I am the less it hurts. I am a son of my heavenly Father. What a marvelous figure of speech!

When I hear Christians say, "I don't do this, and I don't do that, and I am following a set of rules," I immediately recognize that they know very little about the grace of God. They are trying to live the Christian life in their own strength. Paul says, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses,
the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach
others also ([2Tim. 2:2](#)).

Paul was greatly concerned about the future. He wondered, just as we do when we approach the end of our ministry, if other men will come along who will preach and teach the Word of God. Sometimes we develop an Elijah complex. At times when I was a

pastor in Los Angeles, I cried like Elijah, "Oh, Lord, I'm the only one left!" But I found out that was not true. All over the country I've seen the Lord raise up fine young preachers who are standing for the things of God. It is a real concern to us older men that there be young men who will be faithful in teaching God's Word. So Paul was admonishing Timothy to pass along the things he had been teaching him to "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." And God will raise up men with gifts of teaching -- this is the way He moves even today.

As sons of God we ought to be concerned about our Father's business. The Lord Jesus in His humanity as a boy said, "I must be about my Father's business." Well, I have become a son of God -- not like the Lord Jesus, but I've become a son of God through faith in Christ. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the authority] to become the sons of God, even to them that [do no more nor less than] believe on his name" ([John 1:12](#)). Now that I am a son of God I am interested in my Father's business. By the way, are you interested in your Father's business? And the main business is getting out the Word of God. But we need to recognize that we need the grace of God to do the business of God -- as well as in every facet of our lives as His children.

Perhaps you are thinking that you are disappointed with yourself. If you are, that means you must have believed in yourself. You should not have. You are to walk by the grace of God -- "We walk by faith and not by sight." Or perhaps you are discouraged. If you are, that means you do not believe God's Word and way of blessing. You really thought you could do it your way, and now you are discouraged. Or you may be saying, "I hope I can do better in the future." Then you do expect to get some good out of the old nature! Oh, my friend, be strong in the grace of God.

A Good Soldier (2:3-4)

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life;
that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier
[\[2Tim. 2:3-4\]](#).

The Christian is a soldier. How is the child of God a soldier? The last chapter of Ephesians tells us that the believer is fighting a spiritual battle and that he needs to put on the armor of God. Paul said to the Ephesians: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" ([Eph. 6:12-13](#)).

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life." Imagine a soldier in the midst of battle going to his sergeant or his lieutenant and saying, "Sir, I'm sorry to have to leave, but I have to go over into the city to see about some business; and then I have a date with a local girl, and I just won't be able to be here for the battle tonight!" A great many Christians are trying to fight like that today!

"That he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." The believer is to establish his priorities. Here he is to endure hardness, which means to suffer hardness, as

Paul was suffering. There are those who interpret this verse to mean that a Christian is not to get married. Well, he is not talking about celibacy, but he is talking about being so entangled in worldliness that one is not able to live the Christian life.

Let me give you an example. A lady called me one morning while I was a pastor in Los Angeles. She said, "I was at church yesterday when you asked for those who wanted to accept Christ. Well, I did accept Christ, but I made no move to come forward for a particular reason that I want to tell you about. My husband died recently and left me the operation of our liquor store. I am calling you now because I don't think I can continue operating it. If you say to get a hammer and break every bottle, I'll do it. But tell me what I should do." What would you have said? I'll tell you what I told her, "Don't go in there and break bottles. You won't stop the liquor business by breaking up a few bottles. If you could, I'd be in favor of it. But that has been your only income. I would say that you should sell the store and get out of the business."

In that way we are not to entangle ourselves in the things of this life. The child of God is to recognize that he is a soldier. And we are to recognize that the Christian life is not a playground; it is a battlefield. It is a battlefield where battles are being won, and where battles are being lost also. There is a real spiritual battle going on.

An Athlete (2:5)

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned,
except he strive lawfully [[2Tim. 2:5](#)].

Here Paul is comparing the Christian to an athlete. "Strive" refers to contending in the game. He wants to win, and he is doing everything he can to be the winner. Someone has said in a very succinct manner, "The only exercise some Christians get is jumping to conclusions, running down their friends, sidestepping responsibility, and pushing their luck." That is not the kind of exercise Paul is talking about. He spoke of the Christian life as being a racecourse, and he said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 3:14](#)). Paul also said that he wanted to keep his body under control (see [1Cor. 9:24-27](#)). Paul's goal was to run the Christian race in such a way that the One who is at the end of the race -- the Lord Jesus -- would be able to reward him and be able to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" ([Matt. 25:21](#)). A child of God is to "strive"; God intends that he win the race. Every child of God needs to recognize this.

He is to "strive lawfully." That is, he has to play by the rules. There is no shortcut toward living the Christian life. Forget the gimmickry today that condenses Christianity into a little course or a few rules and regulations. God gave us sixty-six books, and each one of them is very important. It takes the composite picture to give us the mind and the Word of God. We are to study the whole Bible. An athlete can't cut the corner of a racetrack. Neither can a baseball player run by second base without touching it; he has to touch all the bases to score. A child of God has to do that, too. If you're going to win, you can't take any shortcuts.

A Farmer (2:6-14)

The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits
[[2Tim. 2:6](#)].

The fourth description of a believer is a husbandman or farmer, the one who tills the field and sows the seed of the Word of God. We hear a great deal today about "laying sheaves at the feet of Jesus." I certainly hope that we will be able to put a few there, but also there has to be the sowing and laboring in the field. After the farmer has done that, there will be a harvest. This is the reason I don't cooperate with the great movements abroad that are going to convert the world by evangelism. My feeling is that the Word of God has to be sown, and I take the position that the total Word has to be sown before there can be a harvest.

Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel [[2Tim. 2:7-8](#)].

"Remember that Jesus Christ" -- the word that is not in the original but was supplied by the translators. Paul just stops to say, "Remember Jesus Christ." Isn't that lovely! That means He's going to sit on David's throne down here. Also, He was raised from the dead, "according to my gospel." It is Paul's gospel because he's the one who preached this gospel.

Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound.

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory
[[2Tim. 2:9-10](#)].

"Wherein I suffer trouble." You may get in a little trouble if you stand for the Word of God. Paul got into trouble "as an evil doer, even unto bonds." He was in prison for teaching the Word of God.

"But the word of God is not bound." Although Paul was in chains, he discovered that the Word of God was still going out in the Roman world. Even with a mad caesar on the throne, a dictator of dictators, who had imprisoned Paul to silence him, the Word of God was not bound. Thank God, it still is going out to the world in our day.

It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him [[2Tim. 2:11](#)].

"It is a faithful saying" or better: "Faithful is the saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him."

"If we be dead with him" should be "if we have died with him." When did we die with Him? When He died over nineteen hundred years ago. When we come to Christ and receive Him as our Savior, His death becomes our death. We are identified with Him and are raised with Him in newness of life. This means that this very day He wants to live His life out through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us [[2Tim. 2:12](#)].

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." I personally believe that not all believers are going to reign with Him. I believe that this verse narrows it down to those who have suffered for Him. I'd be embarrassed if I were put on the same par with the apostle Paul in heaven, because I haven't suffered as he did. I would be apologizing to him constantly for being placed beside him. I believe this verse is referring to a definite group of Christians who have really suffered for Christ. In the Roman world of Paul's day there were many Christians who were martyred -- five million of them, according to Fox -- because they refused to deny Christ.

"If we deny him, he also will deny us." This is very strong language. It reveals, however, that Paul believes that faith without works is dead (see [James 2:17](#)). You see, Paul and James never contradict each other. James is talking about the works of faith, and Paul is saying that genuine faith will produce works. Calvin put it like this: "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone."

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself [[2Tim. 2:13](#)].

God "cannot deny himself." He cannot accept as true one who is false. That's the reason He gave such a scathing denunciation of the religious rulers of His day. He called them hypocrites because they were pretending to be something they were not. If Christ accepted someone who was not genuine, He actually would be denying Himself because He is true. Therefore, we should be genuine, my friend.

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers [[2Tim. 2:14](#)].

"Strive not about words" means disputes of words. God's people need to stick to essentials. We don't need to argue about empty words or philosophies or our little differences. The pastor of an Assembly of God church wrote to me saying that he appreciated our ministry and that he recommends our notes and outlines to his church, although we don't agree on everything. And we don't -- I can't see his point of view on some matters and he can't see mine. Perhaps when we get to heaven, we will find it true that there are three sides to every question: your side, my side, and the right side. Maybe the Lord will have to straighten out both of us. But the important thing is that he and I ought not to argue since we agree on the essentials. And that is the way we both want it. I think we waste a lot of time in a negative approach and trying to correct other believers. Instead of doing that, let's try to stay on the positive side and enjoy each other's fellowship in the gospel.

A Workman, A Teacher (2:15-19)

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth [[2Tim. 2:15](#)].

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God." You are to study, eager to do your utmost, to present yourself approved unto God. The workman here is evidently a teacher, which means he is to be a diligent student of the Word of God.

"Rightly dividing the word of truth" means to handle rightly the Word of God. To rightly divide the Word the Christian is to be a skilled workman like an artisan. The student of the Word must understand that the Word of God is one great bundle of truth and that it has certain right divisions. The Bible is built according to a certain law and structure which must be observed and obeyed as you go through the Word of God. You can't just lift out a verse here and a verse there and choose to ignore a passage here and a passage there. It is so easy to do this, but the Bible is not that kind of Book. This is the reason I maintain that the Bible is to be taught in its entirety.

Here is a quotation that reveals the ignorance of a man who failed to recognize that the Word of God is one great unity that needs to be rightly divided to be understood. I'm quoting from an article: "In short, one way to describe the Bible, written by many different hands over a period of three thousand years and more, would be to say that it is a disorderly collection of sixty-odd books which are often tedious, barbaric, obscure, and teeming with contradictions and inconsistencies. It is a swarming compost of a book, an Irish stew of poetry and propaganda, law and legalism, myth and murk, history and hysteria." That man really spoke a mouthful. His verbiage is quite verbose and reveals a woeful ignorance of the Bible. And he reveals the result of not rightly dividing the Word of God.

Now what is meant by rightly dividing the Word of truth? Well, there are certain dispensations in the Word of God, different methods whereby God dealt with man. The basis of salvation always remains the same. Man is saved only by believing in the atoning death of Christ. But man expresses his faith in God in different ways. For example, Abel and Abraham brought little lambs to sacrifice to the Lord. But I hope you don't take a lamb to church next Sunday morning, because you would be entirely out of order. It's all right for Mary to have a little lamb that follows her to school, but your little lamb should not follow you to church. The reason is that the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world has already come. That Lamb is Jesus (see [John 1:29](#)). You see, Abel and Abraham looked forward to the Lamb of God, and we look back to His death. That is an illustration of rightly dividing the Word of truth. I wish that the man who wrote the article I quoted knew a little bit about the Bible. In his article he says that the Bible is the Book nobody reads, and obviously he belongs in that class. Before any person can speak authoritatively on any subject he has to know the subject. I would certainly recommend that this man study the Bible before he attempts to write about it!

A child of God needs to study the Word of God. When I began my study for the ministry, I attended a denominational school, and I confess that the Bible was utter confusion to me. At that point I would have agreed with the author of this article. Then there was placed in my hands a Scofield Reference Bible, and I sat under the teaching of a wonderful pastor who led me to listen to men like Dr. Harry Ironside, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, and Dr. Arthur I. Brown. Those men blessed my soul, and the Bible became a new Book to me. It started making sense because it was being rightly divided, according to dispensations which exhibit the progressive order of God's dealings with humanity. For

instance, to recognize the distinction between law and grace is basic to the understanding of the Scriptures. And Paul is telling Timothy to study, to be diligent in his study of the Word so that he may be a teacher who rightly divides the Word of truth.

But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness [[2Tim. 2:16](#)].

Avoid empty chatter that has no value whatsoever.

And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus [[2Tim. 2:17](#)].

I don't know much about these two men Paul mentions here, but they apparently were apostates.

Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some [[2Tim. 2:18](#)].

In that day, there were some who were teaching that the resurrection had already taken place, which meant that those still living had missed it!

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity [[2Tim. 2:19](#)].

"Having this seal." The seal was a mark of authentication and ownership. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Back in [Deuteronomy 6:8-9](#), God told His people to take His commandments, "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." The Israelite was to use his house as a billboard for the Word of God. That identified him as a worshiper of God.

Now how about the believer today? How does he advertise the fact that he is a child of God? "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." That is how the people are going to know who belongs to God. This is what separation is: separation from evil and separation unto Christ. If you name the name of Christ, be sure you're not living in sin. Unfortunately, there are some who assert fundamental doctrines and faith, and then it turns out that they have had an affair with a woman or have been proven dishonest. The Lord knows those who are His because He can discern the heart, but all that the world can look at is the outward life. My friend, the world certainly makes sin look attractive by clever advertisements on billboards. How do we as believers compare? Are our lives an attractive advertisement for Christ?

A Vessel (2:20-23)

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work [[2Tim. 2:20-21](#)].

In these verses a believer is pictured as a vessel. If a vessel is to be usable, it must be clean. For example, imagine you are walking across a desert, and you come to an oasis. You are parched and almost dying of thirst. You find two cups there. One is made of gold and highly ornamented, but it's dirty. The other is an old crock cup. It will just barely hold water because it is cracked, but it is clean. Which one would you use? Now give God credit for having as much intelligence as you have. He too uses clean vessels; He does not use dirty vessels. Remember in the second chapter of John's gospel we read of the Lord Jesus making wine at a wedding. He had the servants drag out the old beat-up crocks (which the Jews used for purification) and had them filled with water. He took those old unattractive crocks and used them for His glory. And today God is looking for clean vessels to use -- not beautiful, but clean.

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart [[2Tim. 2:22](#)].

Oh, how many times He has placed together "faith, love, and peace," and they do sum up the Christian life. These things should not be just mouthed from the pulpit but should be lived out through the lives of those in the pew.

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes [[2Tim. 2:23](#)].

Some folk are continually wanting to argue with me about nonessentials. I don't have time for that. We are living in a world that is on fire! Let's get the Word of God to it before it is too late.

A Servant (2:24-26)

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth [[2Tim. 2:24-25](#)].

Finally, a believer is like a servant, and he is to be gentle to all men. It may seem like we have a contradiction here. The soldier was to fight, but the servant is not to fight. Is this a contradiction? No, it is a paradox. When you are standing for the truth, you are to be definite and let people know where you stand. Don't be a coward! Someone has put it this way, "It is said that silence is golden, but sometimes it is just yellow!" My friend, stand for the truth. However --

"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." If you are trying to win a person to Christ, don't argue with him. If he disagrees with you, let him disagree with you. Just keep on giving him the Word of God.

And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will [[2Tim. 2:26](#)].

Chapter 3

THEME: The coming apostasy and the authority of Scripture

In this chapter Paul warns of the apostasy that will come in the last days. He also gives us the antidote for that apostasy, which is the Word of God. That is why this chapter is so important and meaningful for us today.

Apostasy In The Last Days (3:1-9)

[This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come \[2Tim. 3:1\].](#)

"This knows also." Paul is telling Timothy something very important that he wants him to know. He is telling him what to expect and what is to be the future of the church -- it is not a very bright future for the organized church.

"The last days" is a technical term used in several places in the New Testament; it speaks of the last days of the church, immediately preceding the rapture of the church. The last days of the church are not the same as the last days of the nation Israel, which is mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the last days are called the "end of the age" or "the time of the end," which is the Great Tribulation period. That is quite different from the last days of the church, which precede the rapture of the church.

The apostasy that began in the church in Paul's day will continue. Paul warned the church at Ephesus that false leaders would enter the church after his decease. He told them in [Acts 20:29-30](#): "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." They won't give out the Word of God but will fleece the congregations. Believe me, false teachers shear the sheep pretty close!

"Perilous times shall come," which means grievous or desperate times are coming. That doesn't look like the conversion of the world, does it? It doesn't appear that the church is going to bring in the Millennium or is going to convert the world. The Bible doesn't teach that it will. That is the pipe dream of a great many idealists and a great many folk who have lived with their heads ostrich-like in the sand and have never faced reality.

Instead, notice what will be coming in the last days. We have nineteen different descriptions given in the next few verses. It is an ugly brood, but we want to look at them because they present the best scriptural picture of what is happening today. We are, I believe, moving into the last days of the church. My reason for saying this is that the things mentioned in these verses have appeared today. If you look back in the history of the church, you could certainly find some of these things in evidence, but I don't think you could ever find a period in which all of them are so manifested as they are today. I believe we are now in these "perilous" days which are described in this section. I don't know how much longer it will last, but I'm sure it's going to get worse, not better.

[For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.](#)

Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers,
incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers
of God [[2Tim. 3:2-4](#)].

There are nineteen words or phrases used to describe the last days.

1. "Lovers of their own selves" -- self-lovers. This is very much in evidence in our culture today. An article by a newspaper correspondent who had covered Washington, D.C., for many years, noted that the one thing which has characterized Washington for the past twenty years is that those who are in position want the reporters to praise them. In fact, they insist upon it. That is not confined to Washington. Hollywood is probably one of the greatest places for scratching each other's backs. One actor will publicly say something nice about another, then the other one will return the favor. You find this in every walk of life. Even schools have self-love. If a man boosts a school, then the school boosts him by giving him an honorary degree. Also, you can find this in the churches. Paul goes on to say, in chapter 4, [verse 3](#), that congregations will follow teachers "having itching ears." These teachers want their ears scratched -- they want to be complimented. To be complimented, you have to compliment. So the teachers compliment their congregations and their boards of officers. They don't tell the people that they are sinners and need a Savior; they tell them how wonderful they are. It is interesting that the love of self characterizes our contemporary society. Probably there has never been a time when it has been so common.

2. "Covetous" means lovers of money. This follows self-love, because lovers of self become lovers of money. This old nature likes to have a lot of money spent on it. Remember that Paul said in [1Timothy 6:10](#), ". . . the love of money is the root of all evil. . . ." Money itself is not bad. The problems come in our attitude toward our money. Covetousness reveals itself not only in the acquisition of wealth but also in the use of it.

3. "Boasters." That word has in it the idea of swaggerers. You can sometimes tell a proud man by the way he walks. He walks like a peacock; he swaggers.

4. "Proud" means haughty.

5. "Blasphemers" is better translated railers. I remember the story of a fellow whose wife said to him, "Everyone in town is talking about the Smiths' quarrel. Some of them are taking her part and some are taking his part." He chimed in, "Well, I suppose a few eccentric individuals are minding their own business." Well, railers include those who are always poking their noses into somebody else's business.

6. "Disobedient to parents." Certainly this is self-evident. Oh, the thousands of boys and girls and teenagers who are in complete rebellion against their parents!

7. "Unthankful." Many people receive kindnesses from others without even thinking of thanking them. And they accept everything from God without ever returning thanks to Him.

8. "Unholy" is profane. They are actually against God in their conversation and in their manner of life.

9. "Without natural affection" means having abnormal relationships. We are living in a day when homosexuality is being accepted as normal conduct. Yet in [Romans 1:24](#) Paul clearly states, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves." Humanity sinks to its lowest level when it accepts homosexuality.

10. "Trucebreakers" are people who are impossible to get along with. They are irreconcilable -- they won't let you get along with them. I recall seeing a little sign in a restaurant out in West Texas which read, "We can't please everybody, but we try." Well, you can't please everybody; there are folk who are impossible to please.

11. "False accusers" certainly abound today!

12. "Incontinent" means without self-control. That, again, characterizes a large segment of our contemporary society.

13. "Fierce" means savage. In our day the city streets have become asphalt jungles. Many of them are unsafe even in the daytime.

14. "Despisers of those that are good" is better translated haters of the good. We see evidence of that abroad!

15. "Traitors" are betrayers. There are some folk whom you don't dare trust.

16. "Heady" means reckless.

17. "Highminded" means blinded by pride or drunk with pride.

18. "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." This actually characterizes mankind in our day. Never has there been a time when so much money has been spent in order to provide pleasure. Look at the athletic and entertainment events today. These are the things that are attracting millions of people. That is exactly the route Rome took when it went down. The mob was provided with grain and circuses, and then Rome fell. That same thing is happening today. I have always loved to participate in athletics, but I could never understand this type of athletics that just sits and beholds. I never thought that it was very exciting to go out to the coliseum and sit with 85,000 people to watch twenty-two men working for \$25,000 (or more) apiece. Of course I would like to be out there myself, but I am not interested in watching them as much as I would be in watching a ditchdigger because he is not as money hungry. I don't blame any man for making as much money as he can, but the point is that billions of dollars are being spent for entertainment because men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away [[2Tim. 3:5](#)].

19. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." They go through the rituals of religion but lack life and reality.

"From such turn away" means that the believer is to avoid them. Let me ask you a question: If you are in a dead, cold, liberal church, and you are a true believer, what are you doing there when the Word of God says to avoid those things? All across this country

there are wonderful pastors who are faithfully preaching the Word of God. Why aren't you supporting and standing with these fine men?

For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth [[2Tim. 3:6-7](#)].

"Silly women" means silly women of both sexes. There are some people who have attended Bible conferences for years, but they don't know any more about the Word of God now than they did when they began. They have never matured. Their lives are not changed. Friend, if you find yourself in that category today, get down on your knees and ask God to forgive you!

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith [[2Tim. 3:8](#)].

"Jannes and Jambres" apparently were the names of the two magicians called in by Pharaoh when Moses began the miracles and the plagues came upon Egypt. We would never have known the names of these magicians if Paul hadn't given them to us. Of course, that opens a great reservoir of speculation as to where Paul got those names. The simple answer is that the names were revealed to him by the Spirit of God. I don't think that the specific names add much information to the account, but it does reveal that Paul knew their names and that the magicians were real individuals who did withstand Moses. You can read about them in the seventh chapter of Exodus.

The account in Exodus reveals that Satan has power, supernatural power, and also that he is a great little imitator -- he imitates the things that God does. Jannes and Jambres were able to perform miracles by the power of Satan. Moses did them by the power of God. This is, I believe, the reason reference is made to them here. We need to understand in our day that Satan can imitate the power of God. John warns us in [1John 4:1](#), "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Satan can imitate the power of God. In our day I'm afraid that in many places a manifestation of power is misunderstood as coming from God when it really comes from Satan.

"Men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." Paul is saying that men on the contemporary scene, like Jannes and Jambres, have corrupt or depraved minds.

"Reprobate concerning the faith" means that they have discarded the faith -- rejected it totally. We have had a classic example of this within the past few years. There was a bishop of the Episcopal church out here on the West Coast, a man apparently of tremendous ability, but he and his family were delving into that which was spiritualistic, bordering on the supernatural. As nearly as I can tell, this man rejected the great truths of Scripture, and he made a trip to Palestine in an attempt to disprove some of the great truths of the Word of God. Well, rather than disproving any of them, he certainly proved some of them -- and this is one of them. A very strange thing happened out there in a wilderness area for the man to die as he did. I don't propose to offer any explanation,

other than he is a noteworthy example of one who once professed to believe the Word of God but became, as the Scripture says, a reprobate, a castaway. He discarded the faith.

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was [[2Tim. 3:9](#)].

The experience of that Episcopal bishop should be a tremendous warning to Christians. You can dabble in spiritism if you want to, but you are toying with something that is dangerous. There is a manifestation of satanic power about us in our day. It is an anomaly that our crassly materialistic age, which had rejected the supernatural altogether, is discovering the reality of the supernatural, although much of it is satanic, of course.

Authority Of Scriptures In The Last Days (3:10-13)

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience [[2Tim. 3:10](#)].

Timothy knew Paul, knew him well. Paul's life was an open book, as every Christian's life ought to be.

Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me [[2Tim. 3:11](#)].

Timothy knew well Paul's suffering which he had endured in his journeys. Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra were all places in the Galatian country where Paul had gone on his first, second, and third missionary journeys. When Paul was at Lystra, he was stoned and left for dead -- I think he was dead and God raised him up from the dead. Paul said that God intervened in his behalf: "But out of them all the Lord delivered me." Timothy knew of these things because he and his family were from that area.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution [[2Tim. 3:12](#)].

I believe that we are beginning to move into a time in this country when it will cost you something to be a Christian. Melvin Laird, long before he was Secretary of Defense, made a statement in San Francisco at a Republican convention. I do not know the circumstances which prompted the statement, but he said, "In this world it is becoming more and more unpopular to be a Christian. Soon it may become dangerous." We are seeing the accuracy of this statement. Real Christianity and real Christians are becoming very unpopular.

I am not really moved today when the press cries that there is no freedom of press. The bleeding-heart press has played that theme for all it's worth, but have they said anything about the fact that real Christianity is stifled by the press? When was the last time you read a sympathetic article on the biblical position? The media stifles news that presents real Christianity. If a fundamental preacher gets any publicity, it will be distorted and misrepresented. Of course, if a preacher gets on the wrong side of the law he will make the front page; but if he saves a group of people from going to hell he is ignored. Friend, we are moving into an orbit when Christians may have to pay a price to stand for the faith.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving,
and being deceived [[2Tim. 3:13](#)].

"Seducers" are sorcerers or imposters -- either one. "Deceiving, and being deceived" -- leading astray, then in turn led astray themselves.

Such is the picture of the last days before the rapture of the church. Now what can a child of God do in days like these?

Antidote For Apostasy (3:14-17)

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast
been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which
are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in
Christ Jesus [[2Tim. 3:14-15](#)].

The only antidote against a world of apostasy is the Word of God. The only resource and recourse for the child of God is the Word of God.

Paul tells Timothy to continue in the things he has learned. He had learned the Holy Scriptures because his grandmother and mother were Jewish women and had seen to it that Timothy grew up on the Word of God.

"Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." What kind of salvation is he talking about? After all, Timothy was already saved. Well, salvation occurs in three tenses. There is the past tense: I have been saved from sin. The present tense is: I am being saved from sin. The third tense is future: I shall be saved from sin. Let me elaborate. In the past tense, we have been saved. Christ bore a judgment death for us. When we believe on Him, we pass from death to life, and we are no longer under condemnation -- "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . ." ([Rom. 8:1](#)). We are also being saved. He is working out a salvation in us, and we won't even have that perfected in this life. But as we look into the future we know a day is coming when ". . . it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him . . ." ([1John 3:2](#)). Paul is saying that the Scriptures not only give us the modus operandi of being saved (that is, passing from death to life and having eternal life and becoming a child of God), but save us in this present evil world -- enable us to grow and give us deliverance down here. It is my contention that the constant study of the Word of God is the only help that any of us has. It is able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And I think it makes us wise in knowing how to live down here.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for
doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness
[[2Tim. 3:16](#)].

When Paul says "all scripture," he means all of it, from Genesis to Revelation. Somebody will say, "But don't you know that Revelation hadn't been written at the time 2Timothy was written?" Yes, I know that. But the important thing to know is that Revelation became Scripture, so it is covered by this word all.

The word inspiration means "God-breathed." The writers of Scripture were not just pens that the Lord picked up and wrote with. The marvel is that God used these men's personalities, expressed things in their own thought patterns, yet got through exactly what He wanted to say. Through these men God has given us His Word. He has nothing more to say to us today. If He spoke out of heaven today, He wouldn't add anything to what He has already said.

"Is profitable for doctrine." Scripture is good "for doctrine," that is, for teaching. That's why we teach it.

It is good "for reproof," which means conviction. Studying the Bible should bring conviction to us. In fact, that is the way you can test whether the Word of God is moving in your life. If you read this Book like any other book, then the Spirit of God is not moving in your life. But if it convicts you, then you know the Holy Spirit is at work within you.

It is "for correction," that is, setting things right in your life -- correction of error.

It is "for instruction," which means discipline, thinking and acting in accordance with God's will.

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works [[2Tim. 3:17](#)].

"Perfect" doesn't mean that you and I will reach the kind of perfection where absolutely everything we do is right. Rather, it means we will attain full maturation. (There are a lot of baby Christians around today.) We'll be complete, full-grown people.

"Thoroughly furnished" is thoroughly furnished. That is, the Word of God can fit you out for life for every good work. My friend, I am against these little programs and systems that purport to bring you to Christian maturity in a few easy lessons. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and all of it is to be used in order to meet your needs.

As we come to the conclusion of chapter 3, let me remind you that Paul has talked to Timothy in a very personal way. Timothy had been taught the Word of God, and now he is to declare the Word of God. Paul has emphasized that in the days of apostasy our resource, our recourse, is to the Word of God, and it will adequately meet our need.

This is exactly what the Word of God is doing in the lives of multitudes of folk who write to me in response to my Bible-teaching radio program. We have seen that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God -- it is God-breathed. It says what God wants said, and it has said everything He wants to say. For this reason it meets the needs of the human heart. Let me share one letter with you that bears testimony to this fact. It came from Nashville, Tennessee:

I do not intend to make this lengthy. In my mind I have composed page after page to tell you what your teaching of the Word has meant to me and my husband. We were in the same boat, floating along without a navigator. Some day I hope to be able to tell you how joy has been brought into our lives at a time of many family problems and unanswerable questions, how in our middle years we know more love and hope and zest for living than

in our younger years, how our Father used sorrow and you and the "Thru the Bible" ministry to be a great part in bringing this about. I want to point out three things that neither of us (reared by believing parents, and ourselves lifelong church-goers) knew until two years ago when we started tuning you in. We don't know why we didn't see for ourselves. We had teachers who tried to tell us, and we read the Bible. I think the Lord was preparing us. I'm able to see His providence now. But we knew nothing of our sin nature or of the Holy Spirit except as mentioned in the Apostles' Creed. We knew the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, and we believed this. But we didn't know that the Holy Spirit was within us. Nor did we know of the resurrected life. We were fighting the losing battle of trying to be good and had just about given up on it when we started listening to "Thru the Bible." We then realized that indeed we did have to give up and that God would start us in the right direction through His grace manifested by Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The reason I have quoted this letter is to show you that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. God says that His Word is profitable, and this couple in Nashville has certainly proven that it is. When it gets into your life it does something that no other Book can do because it is the very Word of God.

Chapter 4

THEME: Instructions for the last days

It is with a note of sadness that we come to the final chapter of 2 Timothy. Paul will be giving Timothy instructions for the last days. Then we will have Paul's deathbed testimony, which probably are his last written words. We will detect his feeling of loneliness. He is in Rome, alone and incarcerated in that horrible Mamertine prison. He is cold and asks Timothy to bring his cloak. I have been down in that prison -- I'd hate to be imprisoned there! He is lonely and the hours are long. He asks Timothy to bring his books, especially the parchments.

But with the sadness and loneliness we will also hear a note of victory as Paul gives his final charge to his son in the faith. As we hear him, we will be hearing from God the thing He wants us to hear. This is His final word to you and me. If you are not prepared to accept this, I don't think that He has anything more to say to you.

Paul's Charge To Timothy (4:1-5)

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom [[2Tim. 4:1](#)].

This is a very solemn charge or command in the presence of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Who shall judge the quick and the dead," the living and the dead.

"At his appearing and his kingdom." Christ's appearing and His Kingdom are not the same thing. His appearing is the epiphany, the rapture of the church. His Kingdom refers to the revelation of Christ when He returns to earth to establish His Kingdom. Twice He

will do some judging. He will judge His own when He takes them out of the world. Also, He will judge those who turn to God in the Great Tribulation. All of us who are believers will come before Him for judgment at one time or another. Our lives are going to be tested to see if we are to receive a reward or not.

Paul is saying, "In view of the fact that you, Timothy, are going to stand before Him to have your life judged, this is what you are to do." These instructions to Timothy are just as pertinent in our day as at the time they were given by the mouth of Timothy. This is what God is saying to you and me right now.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine [[2Tim. 4:2](#)].

"Preach the word" means to proclaim the Word, to give it out, to herald it. This phrase is sort of a rallying cry, a motto that people respond to. You remember that we had such a thing during World War II: "Remember Pearl Harbor." Back in the Spanish-American War, it was "Remember the Maine." This is our rallying cry today: "Preach the Word."

"Be instant [diligent] in season, out of season." In other words, he means we should preach at any time. If someone wakes you up at two o'clock in the morning you ought to be able to give out the Word of God.

Notice that he does not say to preach about the Bible. A wiseacre student in my class at seminary often came up with some good comments. One day he said to the professor, "You could graduate from this seminary and never own a Bible." Why did he say that? He said that because we studied about the Bible; we did very little studying of the Bible itself. Paul tells us to preach the Word, not just talk about it.

Here is another subtle point: Paul does not say to preach from the Word. He does not say to lift a verse from the Bible and then weave a sermon around it. Someone has well said that a text is a pretext that's taken out of its context. We are not to preach about the Word of God or from the Word of God, but preach the Word of God itself!

"Be instant in season, out of season." The word instant means "diligent," or even better "urgent." There is a compulsion upon us. We should be chafing at the bit, ready to give out the Word of God. "In season, out of season" means any time of the day or night, any time of the year, under any and all circumstances.

"Reprove" -- it should be given with conviction.

"Rebuke" actually means to threaten! It reminds me of a black minister, a wonderful man of God, whose pulpit I have often shared. I heard him really threaten his people. He said he didn't want any deacons who were not going to "deac." If they didn't intend to "deac" he didn't want them on the board. Not many preachers have the courage to say that!

"Exhort" means comfort. There are times when believers really need comfort.

"With all longsuffering" means that all of us who give out the Word of God need to exercise a great deal of patience.

"Doctrine" means, as we have said previously, teaching. Every minister should have a teaching ministry.

All of this is included in preaching the Word of God.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;
but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers,
having itching ears [[2Tim. 4:3](#)].

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." I wonder if our contemporary society has come to this place. Although we are startled, amazed, and overwhelmed by the number of people today who are listening to the teaching of the Word, compared to the total population, that group is a very small percentage indeed. There are very few church members who will endure sound doctrine. They don't want to hear it. What do they want?

"After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Dr. Marvin R. Vincent discusses the meaning of this sentence in his Word Studies in the New Testament, Volume IV, pages 320-321:

[They] shall invite teachers en masse. In periods of unsettled faith, skepticism, and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt. The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found.

That certainly is true today. Someone has said that the modern pulpit is a sounding board that is merely saying back to the people what they want to hear.

"Having itching ears." Again I quote Dr. Vincent, page 321:

Clement of Alexandria describes certain teachers as "scratching and tickling, in no human way, the ears of those who eagerly desire to be scratched. . . ." Seneca says: "Some come to hear, not to learn, just as we go to the theatre, for pleasure, to delight our ears with the speaking or the voice or the plays."

What a picture of our day! As someone has said, some people go to church to close their eyes and others to eye the clothes! In other words, they don't go to church to hear sound (lit. healthy) doctrine! They don't want to hear the Word of God; they want a substitute. Dr. Warren Wiersbe, former pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, has said:

They want religious entertainment from Christian performers who will tickle their ears. We have a love for novelty in the churches today: emotional movies, pageants, foot-tapping music, colored lights, etc. The man who simply opens the Bible is rejected while the shallow religious entertainer becomes a celebrity. And [verse 4](#) indicates that itching ears soon will become deaf ears as people turn away from the truth and believe man-made fables.

That is a very excellent statement, and now let us read [verse 4](#) --

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be
turned unto fables [[2Tim. 4:4](#)].

They want something novel, something that will entertain them.

When I first came to California, the late Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein, a great man of God who had been a very outstanding teacher, wintered out here in Pasadena, and I went to visit him. He asked me how I liked California, and I replied, "I love it here, but it's very interesting that if I teach the Book of Revelation, I can fill the church (even during midweek service), but if I begin teaching the Epistle to the Romans, I can practically empty the church. I find there are people who will run all the way across this area to find out from a speaker just how many hairs are in the horse's tail in Revelation." He then made a statement to me that I shall never forget, "Dr. McGee, you're going to find out in your own ministry that there are a great many people more interested in Antichrist than they are in Christ."

There are a lot of folk with itching ears. They like to hear about these strange, weird, unusual things. They want to be entertained, but they don't want to be given the Word of God. Many people have told me that, when they started listening to me on the radio, they not only didn't like my accent, they didn't like what I said. They accused me of stepping on their toes. But I didn't even know them -- I didn't step on their toes; the Word of God did. I was just preaching the Scriptures. Then as they continued to listen, they found out that the Word of God was good for them. I'm sure there are many folk from whom I have never heard who tuned me in, then tuned me out -- because they didn't want to hear the Word of God; they preferred to be entertained.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry [[2Tim. 4:5](#)].

The work of an evangelist didn't mean what it does today. In Paul's day an evangelist was a traveling teacher, a missionary. Paul was an evangelist in that sense. Now he says to Timothy, "You are to do the work of an evangelist," which is what he did do when he was with the apostle Paul.

"Endure afflictions" -- he warned that Timothy would suffer hardships for preaching the Word of God in the last days.

Paul's Deathbed Testimony (4:6-8)

Now we come to a great passage of Scripture. Paul has written here his own epitaph.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing [[2Tim. 4:6-8](#)].

"I am now ready to be offered." If you had gone into that execution room in Rome, you would have seen a bloody spectacle. Very candidly, it would have been sickening to see him put his head on the chopping block, to watch the big, burly, brutal Roman soldier lift

that tremendous blade above his head, then with one fell swoop sever the head from the body and see the head drop into a basket on one side and the body fall limp and trembling on the other side. But Paul says if that's all you saw, you really didn't see very much. That happened to be an altar, and his life was being poured out as a libation, a drink offering. Paul used that figure of speech before in his letter to the Philippians, when he was arrested for the first time and thought death was before him. He wrote in [Philippians 2:17](#), "Yea, and if I be offered [poured out as a drink offering] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." He wanted his life to be poured out. Now he could say at the end of his life that his life had been poured out like a drink offering.

What was the drink offering? There were no specific instructions given by God to the Israelites concerning the drink offering. However, it is mentioned again and again in Exodus and Leviticus. The wine was taken and poured over the sacrifice, which, of course, was really hot because it was on a brazen altar with fire underneath it. You know exactly what would happen. The drink offering would go up in steam. It would just evaporate and disappear. That is exactly what Paul is saying here. "I have just poured out my life as a drink offering on the sacrifice of Christ. It has been nothing for me but everything for Him." Paul's life would soon disappear, and all that could be seen was Christ. This is one of the most wonderful figures of speech he has used. So many Christians try to be remembered by having their names chiseled in stone or by having a building named in their memory. Paul was not interested in that type of thing. He says, "My life is a drink offering poured out; Christ -- not Paul -- is the One who is to be exalted." This is a very rich passage of Scripture. Paul's epitaph is divided into two sections. The first is retrospective, in which Paul looks back upon his earthly life -- this is right before he is executed. Then the second part of the epitaph is the prospective. He looks forward to eternal life. The earthly life and the eternal life are separated by what we call death down here.

Paul sums up his life in three different ways: "I have fought a good fight." He has been a soldier, a good soldier. There had been a battle to be fought and a victory to be won. Here at the end of his life he says, "I have been a soldier of my Savior." My friend, all believers should take that position. There is a battle to be fought, and every Christian should be a defender of the Word of God and stand for the great truths of the Bible.

"I have finished my course." Life is not only a battle, life is a race. Paul was a disciplined athlete who was striving to win the prize. During the race Paul was keeping his body under subjection. He was attempting to live the Christian life in such a way that he would not be disapproved. He wrote in [1Corinthians 9:27](#), "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. . . ." Paul also wrote in [Hebrews 12:1-2](#) (I consider him the author of that book): ". . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. . . ." Now at the end of his life he could say, "I have finished my course" -- he had touched all the bases; he had completed all that God had planned for Him.

"I have kept the faith." Life had been a trust from God, and he had been a good steward. He had kept the faith. He had never veered from the great truths and doctrines in the Word of God.

What tremendous statements these are!

Now let's return to his statement in [verse 6](#): "my departure is at hand." Departure is from a different Greek word than the one used in 1 Thessalonians for the departure of the church at the Rapture from this earth. Paul himself was going through a different doorway. Believers who are living when the Rapture takes place will not go through the doorway of death. ". . . We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . ." ([1Cor. 15:51-52](#)). The Greek word which Paul uses in speaking of his departure is *analsis*, an entirely different word. It is made up of two words, one of which is *luo*, which means "to untie or unloose." *Analsis* could be used to refer to untying anything, but basically it was a nautical term used for a ship which was tied up at the harbor, ready to put out to sea.

Paul had an altogether different conception than that which is popular today. I've heard this so often at funeral services: "Dear Brother So-and-So. He's come into the harbor at last. He's been out yonder on a pretty wild sea, but the voyage is over now, and he's come into the harbor." Paul is really saying just the opposite of this. He's saying, "I've been tied down to the harbor." And that is what life is -- we haven't been anywhere yet; we've just been tied down to this little earth.

I know of only one writer from the past who has caught this meaning of Paul's. Tennyson wrote as the first verse of his poem, "Crossing the Bar":

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

That's what death is for the child of God. It is a release for us.

Paul says, "Don't look at my execution and let blood make you sick. I'm like a ship that has been tied up at the harbor. When death comes, I'm really taking off to go and be with Christ, which will be far better."

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." This brings us to the positive side. Paul is looking forward to the future. He is expecting a crown of righteousness. A crown is a reward, and he will receive his reward someday. I don't think it has been given to him yet, but the Lord has it for him when He starts passing them out.

There are several such crowns mentioned in the New Testament. For example, [1Corinthians 9:24-25](#) reads: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." That is the athlete's crown for being a winner on the racetrack of life. Also there is the soulwinner's crown, mentioned in [Philippians 4:1](#): ". . . my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown. . . ." A crown is given for having a part in leading folk to the Lord. Paul will have many crowns -- there is no doubt about that.

"A crown of righteousness" is, I believe, the reward for a righteous life, and Paul will receive that.

"Unto all them also that love his appearing" does not refer to doctrine you hold regarding His appearing. You may be a premillennialist, a postmillennialist, or an amillennialist. I have news for you: there's no reward for holding any one of those views. The question is: Do you love His appearing? To love His appearing means that you will have to love Him. Oh, my friend, do you have a close relationship with Him? Have you ever told Him that you love Him? (I have a notion that Paul told the Lord every day that he loved Him, because he had hated and persecuted Him before.) There is a crown for those who love His appearing. I would like to have that crown. I believe it will shine brighter than all the others.

Paul's Last Words (4:9-22)

We have heard a triumphant note in the preceding verses, but now it's not so triumphant. Paul faces the reality of his situation.

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me [[2Tim. 4:9](#)].

Why does he say this? He is lonesome. When I visited that Mamertine prison, I thought of these words.

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia [[2Tim. 4:10](#)].

Demas took off -- he couldn't stand the heat. So he left Paul and went to Thessalonica, which was quite a distance.

"Titus unto Dalmatia." I don't know if these other brethren had a legitimate excuse for leaving Paul, but I think Titus did. Paul probably sent him to Dalmatia to perform a ministry in his behalf. I don't know enough about Crescens to defend him.

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry [[2Tim. 4:11](#)].

"Only Luke is with me" -- good old Dr. Luke stood by Paul clear to the end.

"Take Mark, and bring him with thee." Remember that Paul wouldn't take John Mark with him on his second missionary journey. But Paul had been wrong about Mark, and now he was able to say that Mark was profitable to him in his ministry -- and I am glad he said that here as one of his last words.

And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus [[2Tim. 4:12](#)].

Paul sent him back to Ephesus because he was the pastor of the church there. He couldn't stick around Rome indefinitely since he was pastoring a church.

Now notice something that is quite revealing --

The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments [[2Tim. 4:13](#)].

Paul asks for his cloak or coat which he had left at Troas. This reveals a little of Paul's suffering. I have been in that prison in May and June, and it was cold in there. This is a request for his physical need.

"And the books, but especially the parchments" -- he needed something to read, something for his mind.

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works [[2Tim. 4:14](#)].

His "reward" won't be what Alexander would consider a reward! I am sure God will judge him for what he did to Paul.

Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words [[2Tim. 4:15](#)].

Paul warns Timothy to be on guard against him. He is one of those laymen who will softsoap you, then put a knife in you when you turn your back. Watch out for him.

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge [[2Tim. 4:16](#)].

"At my first answer" was either the preliminary hearing which opened Paul's final trial, or it was his first trial in Rome three years earlier. Paul was alone at that time.

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion [[2Tim. 4:17](#)].

Paul had asked Timothy for his cloak -- something for his body -- and his books and parchments -- something for his mind; now here is something for his spirit: "The Lord stood with me." All of us, whether in or out of prison, have needs in these three areas. It is wonderful to be able to say, "The Lord is with me."

"I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" -- he was spared execution at that time.

And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen [[2Tim. 4:18](#)].

Paul knew he was going to be translated to heaven.

Paul concludes this personal letter to Timothy with references to these mutual friends --

Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

Erastus abode in Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen
[\[2Tim. 4:19-22\]](#).

Notice that he again urges Timothy to come, and to come before winter. This concludes the tremendous swan song of the apostle Paul.

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